If Thou Shalt Confess

by

Jan Karel Van Baalen

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To .....

In Remembrance of $\frac{\text{His}}{\text{Her}}$

Public Confession of Faith

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If Thou Shalt Confess

by

JAN KAREL VAN BAALEN, B.D.

"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved:

"for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

—*Paul to the Romans*

FOURTH REVISED AND
ENLARGED EDITION

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To the blessed memory of my Father and my Mother who, during their long lives of ninety and eighty years, have continually preached that "Jehovah is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth".

FOREWORD TO THE THIRD EDITION

IT gives me occasion for gratitude alike to God and to the patience of man that a third impression of this booklet has become necessary.

This edition varies from its predecessors in three particulars. Some minor changes and additions have been inserted. Not many, as I have found little that I should like to add, to remove, or to place in a different light. More alterations have been made in the text. This has been carefully reviewed, and, it is hoped, purged from linguistic impurity. Scripture passages in this edition have been taken from the American Revised Version, admittedly the best version of the Bible, and recommended by the Christian Reformed Synod of 1926.

More than four additional years spent in the ministry since this small guide-book was first printed, have convinced me that young people are open to some advice such as this at the time of their public confession of faith. Nor can the wisdom be doubted of giving them a few words of cheer upon their pathway. The future of the Church does not look bright. Unbelief assumes bold proportions. Error borrows the garment of light. Sin takes alluring forms.

At such a time our younger generation may well ask if it pays to serve the Lord after the fashion of their fathers.

It does pay! Hardships, temptations fall to the lot of all. But blest at all times are those who lean upon the Rock of Ages. In proportion

as they surrender their all to Christ, they will enjoy the Christian life. What the dear old Quaker Grandmother wrote of our sins, is equally true of our anxieties, worries, and pains: We should not merely bring them to the foot of the cross; we must also leave them there. In the words of storm-tossed, but stout-hearted Isaiah, *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee.*

This is *the peace of God, which passeth all understanding.*

This is *the dawning light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.*

This light, that perfect peace, they are with us in city or country, by day or by night, in flaming, sociable youth, and in dreary, lonely old age. They are the inalienable treasure of them that *confess Jesus as Lord,* doing so *in spirit and truth.*

Such happiness does not depend upon joy or sorrow, upon persecutions or honor. They are of the heart itself; safely locked and entwined there by Christ Himself.

May it please our kind Father to use these few pages to the end that many young Christians may find such bliss. And may they who shall read them, learn to pray with the man of God, *"Establish my footsteps in thy word; and let not any iniquity have dominion over me . . . . Make thy face to shine upon thy sevant; and teach me thy statutes . . . . Consider how I love thy precepts: quicken me, O Jehovah, according to thy loving-kindness."*

J. K. Van Baalen.

Pease, Minnesota.
June, 1927.

FOREWORD TO THE FOURTH EDITION

THE contents of the chapter on *Amusements* have been slightly changed and embodied under the heading *Recreation*. In this way some other and more constructive material could be added. Then, too, I have acted upon a gratefully acknowledged hint in a review by the Rev. Henry Beets, LL. D., in *The Banner*. The results of this may be found in the paragraph called *Saved to Serve*. May the blessing of the Lord rest upon all those who will read this fourth edition.

THE AUTHOR.

Grand Rapids, Michigan.
March, 1931.

If Thou Shalt Confess

Young Brother or Sister,
Beloved in our common
Master and Savior:

IF now you have confessed the Lord Jesus as your Savior sincerely and whole-heartedly there is joy in heaven. For thus it is written in the Book which from now on will be your chief guide through life, *Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth,* and again, *There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth,* a joy so immense that it is said to surpass even the joy *over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance* (Luke 15).

This is not saying that you have hitherto lived a life of open sin, or must have been converted as a drunkard is changed when God brings him to a standstill. Your former life may have been like that of young Timothy, so that an apostle might have said to you also that *from a child thou hast known the Holy Scrip-*

tures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus, and that therefore he could *call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother, and thy mother; and I am persuaded that in thee also.* You may not remember a time when you did not love your Savior; for God promised your parents that He would be the God of their seed also. And to you He pledged far back in the days of your first babyhood that He would regenerate you by His Spirit, and dwell and work within you with that same Holy Spirit. But even in that most ideal case you have now for the first time openly asserted that you accept these promises of your Covenant God, and that by His grace you will forsake the ways of sin and live for Him. Thus every confession of faith implies repentance from sin, as you were taught that *the true conversion of man consists of two parts: of a sincere sorrow of heart, that we have provoked God by our sins . . . and a sincere joy of heart in God through Christ . . . .* (Heidelberg

Catechism, XXXIII Lord's Day). And accordingly your public profession included this repentance when you solemnly stated that you will *be the grace of God . . . lead a new, godly life.*

Perhaps, as you have realized what a miserable sinner you were by nature, how utterly useless a creature to God, you wonder how it is possible that angels in heaven should rejoice because of your (now first confessed) conversion. However, there is a far greater mystery, and well you may ponder the greatest question of all: How could a Holy, and self-sufficient God deliver up His own Son, with Whom He gave His all, and surrender Him to the most shameful death; how could He endure the reviling and tolerate the agonies of His beloved Child Jesus; how go to such infinite trouble that you might be enabled to repent and to be saved? Freely you may consider it; for the more you meditate upon the marvel of divine mercy, the more deeply you will abhor yourself; the more fervently you will love your God and your Savior; the more ardently you will long for His

second coming, that you may see Him at last, and cast yourself at His blessed feet, once cruelly pierced for you; and the stronger will be your desire to be changed to complete perfection, and thereby fitted to serve Him more holily.

For many years you have gone to church, and many a sermon you have heard long since; you have known that Jesus is an able Savior, willing to give rest to the weary and heavy laden. And you have admired Him for all this. But today it is different! Today you have an altogether new Christ, for you have grasped the hand which was extended to you so long, and you have felt His warm Redeemer's embrace. I should not be greatly surprised if today you have the joy bells ringing in your heart,

> Floods of joy o'er my soul
> Like the sea billows roll,
> Since Jesus came into my heart.

Not even should I be amazed if in the extreme delight of your soul you have pledged,

> Jesus, I am coming home today,
> Never, never more from Thee to stray.

And yet, and yet . . . . . !

I do not wish to discourage you. I am not going to say that your ecstasy is unnatural. I have no desire to take away from you the least part of your present bliss.

But consider this: Demas, one time a co-worker with Paul, did far more than you have done so far. He not only professed belief in Christ, but he was with the apostle while the latter was an imperial prisoner in Rome. From here he sent his salutations to the church at Colossae and to Philemon. And so earnest and so useful for the kingdom he appeared to even that great apostle that St. Paul spoke of him as *my fellow-worker,* and mentioned him in the same breath with *Luke the beloved physician.* And still this same man, when the outlook of Paul's career remained dark and it seemed that his suffering would end in death only, chose the pleasures of this world rather than the reproach of Christ; and in his last epistle, written shortly before his cruel death under Nero, we hear the aged apostle appeal to his dearly

beloved son Timothy for a visit as he is now fighting all alone; and from a heart that is cut and wounded he adds these sorrowful words, *For Demas forsook me, having loved this present world, and went to Thessalonica* (2 Tim. 4:9, 10). How sad, how great a disappointment that must have been to Paul the apostle! But what of Demas? He had known the way, and he will receive many stripes. And what of these others before and after him, what of the countless host of those who began by "running well", confessing Christ and recommending His service to others, but someone hindered them that they should not obey the truth, and they ended by the flesh (Gal. 3:3; 5:7)? Of them it is said that they *were once enlightened,* and even that they *tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the age to come,* and yet they *fell away*: and it will be impossible for them to repent anew, for they *crucify the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame* (Heb. 6:4).

You may remark that your pastor has taught you that there is no such thing as an apostasy, or falling away of the saints. It is well. But observe how very near the true faith these crucifiers of Jesus came as far as the outward appearance of things went. He Himself stated that they received the word of God *with joy* (Matt. 13:20). No doubt their friends believed them to be sincere. Surely they themselves thought that they were true to the core when so easily they sang,

> Where He leads me I will follow,
> Where He leads me I will follow,
> I'll go with Him, with Him all the way.

But they knew not that they were being carried by their emotions and swayed by the swing of a catching melody. Without fail Paul himself expected his fellow worker of the days of his first imprisonment in Rome to remain faithful. Thus all of this only proves that no man can judge the motives of his fellow human beings; and, more than this, that it is extremely difficult to value the secret springs of one's own deeds.

Here, then, is the reason why we would ask your attention for a while. If you have truly given yourself to Christ, you will not be lost; for *the gifts and the calling of God are not repented of* (Rom. 11:29). But you will—I do not say worry, for that is not Christian, but—be very careful lest you become unfaithful and so be lost in the end. Paul knew that he was not a reprobate (2 Cor. 13:6); yet he did several hard things lest he might be rejected (1 Cor. 9:27). In other words, no true Christian will ever fall from grace; but he alone is a true Christian who is always careful lest he might fall from grace. Remember also that spiritual life is like the natural life; we either increase or decrease in strength, there being no such thing in nature or in grace as a standstill. We must, then, either grow in grace, or go backward. But going backward, if continued long enough, leads to a forsaking of the Lord like that of Demas; if kept up only for a while, grieves the Holy Spirit of God, and causes pangs and sorrows of heart to the believer. It would therefore seem

far better to be always growing spiritually and increasing in love and power. For this reason we would like to give you some counsel such as young travelers to the City of Gold shall do well to follow. And we might add, In the same measure in which you will practice the following advice, you will *attain unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ* (Eph. 4:13); and, should you find our suggestions difficult to act upon, your crown will also be according to your victories.

Believing and Confessing

IF NOW you will read once more the text quoted on the title page, Rom. 10:9, 10, you will see that it speaks of two things necessary to salvation. You must *believe in thy heart,* which is first; and you will give utterance to this faith *if thou shalt confess with thy mouth,* which is the natural result of believing. You must believe with your heart *that God raised Jesus from the dead,* and you must believe that He has raised Him as your own personal Lord. Such believing with the heart is *unto righteousness* because it means so much. For what is said with these few words as to the contents of your faith is nothing short of a compendium of the teachings of Scripture concerning the Son of God. That He died in order to take away your unrighteousness by His atoning sacrifice is included. Similarly, that He was raised by the One whose answer against sin was

to be pacified, as an unmistakable proof that His perfect holiness and righteousness are satisfied. Next, that He is glorified, and has all power in heaven and in earth, since He is called Lord. From this follows that He is to come again in greater majesty, because *now we see not yet all things subjected to Him* (Heb.2:8). Finally, if He was raised as well as dead for us we must also arise with Him. All this is implied in these verses. And when it is said that *with the mouth confession is made unto salvation*, this does not mean that confessing adds something to the righteousness we obtain by believing. It neither adds righteousness, nor something else which is necessary in order to be saved; but since faith without confession would be a barren faith, true faith must utter itself in words (2 Cor. 4:13), and in deeds (James 2:20), and that notwithstanding persecution might arise.

From this it will be plain that as surely as this living faith has to be there continually, and in this differs from the faith of men like Demas *which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall*

away (Luke 8: 13), so also *confessing Jesus as Lord* is to be a continued and repeated act. It does not cease with the public confession of faith before consistory or congregation, but it rather begins with that, and is to be done as long as you believe. And that means that confessing the Lord Jesus is the Christian's one task on earth. You who have now confessed Him as your Lord are to do so without ceasing *with thy mouth.* But that includes that you are to do so without ceasing with your deeds, for should these two, words and deeds, belie one another, how could your confession be true and *unto salvation?*

This implies that you will have to know more about Him. In order to be able continually to confess Him with the same ardor and conviction with which you have now confessed Him in the glow of your first love, you will need fresh and daily impressions of His wonderful attributes. You must learn many beautiful things in regard to your Savior. And, far from becoming so familiar with Him as to lose your interest in His love,

you will be more and more amazed on account of His manifold beauty. You will increase in sincerity and grow in boldness as you continue to confess your faith in Him. And, that you may learn to understand more fully what that means that He is your Lord, you will have to learn more about His will in an experimental way, and to unlearn a good deal of your own wilfulness. I would therefore call your attention to a few things which may perhaps be brought together under the common head of

Reading

ALL that you now know in reference to your Savior, all that you believe concerning Him, and confess of Him, you owe either directly or indirectly to the Bible. Directly through reading this Book of God for yourself; indirectly through what others told you of the things they learned concerning Him by studying this Holy Book. It is the only Book which God has written for you. It is for this very reason the Book which

you should read more than all other books combined. Yet it is studied altogether too little. Many have the Bible in their homes, but are *children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error* (Eph. 4:14), and all because they are totally ignorant of the Book's teachings. Others know enough to keep out of hell; but their spiritual life languishes, for they do not take the time for that which should come first. Others again try to feed their souls, but they would rather go to some second-hand source, feeding upon meditations and the short pages of some Calendar for Daily Food, with this result only that they do not attain to a healthy, robust life in the Word. Here lurks a danger. It is easier to read books or short essays about certain truths of the Bible than to get to work and dig into that divinely deep Book and to realize that God has revealed it all that it should be studied in its entirety. It is easier to have some one else feed us with milk than to go out and

find and prepare our own food. But the first is the proper way to be fed for babies; while adults need more solid food if they are to enjoy increasing health and strength. You who have *confessed with your mouth* are no longer supposed to be a babe in Christ; you have at least reached the period of intellectual and spiritual adolescence. Remember then that no book or treatise about the Bible can ever take the place of the Bible, and decide that from now on you will read more in the Word of God than you will study other books. Lo, here is the book in which God wishes to speak to you, the only way in which He will speak to you directly; read, then, read the Bible, thereby giving God a chance to speak to you. For that is necessary if you are to know more of His love and would continue to be able to *confess with your mouth.* Think of your faith to be confessed as of a stream of living water, and of the Bible as the source of that river, and you will agree that if you put a dam between the river and its source, that stream will soon cease to flow.

But how must you read the Bible? There are many ways that are commendable. Perhaps you need not so much one of these, however, as you are in need of a combined use of some of them. We of Dutch descent have the worthy custom of reading a chapter after each meal. I call that a praiseworthy habit, for our souls need to be fed as much as our bodies; and especially when this reading is followed by the singing of a Psalm or Hymn, and a prayer by the head of the family in which the needs of the members of the household are brought before the mercy seat; that family, acting upon the suggestion of the Book (Col. 3: 16), will be blessed of the Lord. In some American circles this good custom has been abandoned long since, and church leaders are now complaining of the evil results of this omission and of the difficulty of re-establishing the family altar once it has been deprived of its place of honor.

But, no matter how strongly we advise you to abide by this time-honored custom, and to introduce it should you

be, either now or in later life, in a position to do so, we would not have you think that this way of reading the Bible is sufficient. The Bible is such a wonderful Book that it may and that it should serve different purposes. Now, true though it may be that oftentimes a separate chapter or even a single verse may contain food, comfort, or warning sufficient to set you thinking an entire day, the reverse is also true: you should not use the Bible exclusively in a manner which you would not apply to any other book on earth. Who, if he were truly interested in a fascinating story, would read just a few pages, or even half a page, and quit again, only to read another page at some future time? If novels are read through in an evening, is not the story of Abraham or of Joseph, are not the Gospel accounts of the life of our Savior interesting enough to keep our attention for more than a few fleeting minutes at a time? It has been truly said that it takes about four minutes to withdraw the mind from things earthly and fix it thoroughly upon the spiritual;

and by the time that is accomplished the single-chapter-reader closes the Book. Let the reader add a second chapter to the first, and he will find that he got a far greater blessing out of the second than he did out of the first, and that with the reading of the third chapter his joy and his adaptability to grasp the meaning increased still more.

Reading the Bible, however, is not sufficient. There is too much in it you would not understand without more accomplished aid. You should make use of such means as are within your reach in order to grow in knowledge. This may cost time and painstaking efforts; but you will not shrink from this. The wise ancient Greeks had a saying, *For toilsome efforts the gods do sell us all things good.* Your Catechism states that in praying the Lord's Prayer, when first you ask, *Hallowed by Thy Name,* you petition, *Grant us first rightly to know Thee.* It would not be well then to be afraid of exerting yourself in order to reach a state of more perfect knowledge of God as He has revealed Himself.

For this reason as well as for many another you will first of all attend church faithfully, and by no means in an irregular way. Secondly, it is recommended that you continue to attend your pastor's Bible class, preferably one for confessing members. You should also read a few of the world's standard works on the spiritual life as portrayed in the Bible, as for instance John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress.* You should study your text book on *Reformed Doctrine,* which will enable you to stand firm in your conviction and to *prove the spirits whether they are of God* (I John 4:1). And you ought to have a book which will give you a general view of the difference in composition, scope, and purpose of the various Bible books, such as H. T. Sell's *Bible Study by Books,* or, W. Stuart, *Helps for Bible Study.* This you will find a great help in trying to understand the Bible.

As a Christian you should also know what is going on in the world, and especially in the religious world. This will enable you to see and to confess that God does rule the world. You should, there-

fore, be a regular reader of *the official Church weekly* your denomination publishes. Do not read it "together with" some one else, as is the habit of some. You receive a greater bargain in this weekly visitor with its editorials, its Sunday School lesson and its many other features than you do for any other two dollars you spend the year around. Moreover, if you pay for your subscription yourself you will appreciate what you get for your money, and you will have the paper in the home all week. While the publication committee needs your subscription fee in order to create as good a paper as possible.

On the whole, you should be careful in the choice of your literature. F. Bettex pointedly remarks that we often hear that a book is "nice", but seldom that it is "wholesome"; while books are really food for the mind as bread is food for the body. You do not eat poisoned food; do not read poisonous books either. In ascertaining which books furnish healthy food, why not ask the opinion of your

pastor, or of the librarian of your church library?

Then, too, as a Christian you do not wish to keep your knowledge to yourself. You desire to make use of it for to *confess with thy mouth.* For this reason let us consider for a moment or two the subject of

Teaching

PERHAPS you never thought that you might be able to *confess with thy mouth* by teaching others. But you desire to learn. Which is the first value of teaching others? *By teaching we learn,* said the old Romans. What you must tell others you first have to know well yourself before you can express it in words. By teaching we learn to think, and to express ourselves. And so teaching teaches us to confess. Perhaps you could arrange to have yourself put on a Sunday School Teachers' staff. You might be able to become a channel of blessings in that way.

Still, we cannot all of us teach Bible School, not even if we extend our

work to those outside the churches and tell the story of Jesus' love to the children of the wayward. There is another way. Perhaps you have younger brothers and sisters. These have to study their lesson for Sunday School, or "learn questions" for the Bible Class. Supposing you would take some of your time to help these little ones in their task, often so gigantic in their eyes. Let us say that you would tell them the Bible stories, go over the lesson with them. You could, by doing this simple work, become a power for good. In the first place, you would review and thereby keep fresh your own knowledge. Secondly, you would make it more pleasant and more easy for the younger ones to study their lessons. Thirdly, the impression which our little ones so often entertain, that "learning Catechism" is a necessary evil, might disappear altogether, if they should realize that their hero brother, or their "big sister" thinks such work worth while, and even now enjoys it after he or she is all through with it. And finally, what boundless opportunities to leave

the imprint of your own newly confessed faith upon their receptive young hearts if occasionally you should add a few words like these, "Now, Johnnie, was not that wonderful, and must we not love a God who is willing to do so much for us?" Would it not seem that everybody that has confessed his love for his Savior could do at least that much?

Or, if there are no children in the family to which you belong, is there not some little boy in the neighborhood whose parents know only Dutch while he himself understands but English? And, if for this reason the little fellow does not get what he needs, could not you cultivate his acquaintance and become "a friend in need" to him in the above sense? Surely, if this were more generally practiced, the Church of Christ would fare better, and we ministers should notice the results in our work.

Furthermore, you may sometimes have an occasion for indirect teaching and confessing by reading an essay or reciting a selection before one of the organizations representing the

Social Life

of your church. And that is one reason why it would be profitable for you to join one or more of these societies. When your turn comes, never fail to respond. If you do so, some one else has the same right; and if they all did likewise, what would become of your society? But there are additional motives. You may do good to the cause of the Kingdom by sewing, by contributing, in general, by sharing the activities. Be, then, an active member. Better not to join than to be dragged along. A number of dead members are more detrimental to a society than anything else. They kill its spirit. They are likely to reduce the enthusiasm of other members. They discourage, and are a force for evil. Do not join more clubs, societies, or organizations than you can do justice to as a good member. Nor should you join so many that your home-life would suffer from it. It is desirable to spend some of our time away from home, among our fellow church members. It is wrong never to be at home,

and to feel at home least of all at home. But such is the tendency of our time. That is why we would seriously warn you: It is not right to be gone from home every single night. That breaks up the family life. And a nation where the family life has ceased to thrive is doomed.

Another consideration why you should join the social life of your church is that it will develop friendships within the range of like-minded Christians. This is always necessary, but particularly so in the teens and in the early twenties. Worldly ties, especially with the opposite sex, should be guarded against. They will seldom promote spiritual growth, and rarely influence the other party for good. In these youthful stages most of us have enough temptations to overcome, while our spiritual life is not as yet so deeply rooted that we can afford to invite additional dangers. Many a young girl has been sadly disillusioned. In her early zeal she actually hoped that she might "reform" a friend who was not very much interested in church work or

church attendance. Did he not change his habits considerably out of good will toward her? Was it not easy for her to keep him away from wrong company and to take him with her to church and society? But in her inexperienced zeal she overlooked that no one's heart can be changed by outward reformation. It takes the Holy Spirit of God to change the heart of the sinner from hatred of God to a love of Christ and things Christian. And though it pleases Him to make use of human instruments to attain to this end, at no time may one's own future be made to depend upon a possible, but as yet in no wise certain outcome of the experiment. Now the latter is done not only where it has come to a public engagement, but in all such cases where hopes are encouraged, and bonds are formed from which it will be hard to break away later. It is a theory based upon numerous facts that the chances are far greater that the confessing member will drift away with the other party after, or even before marriage, than that the latter will continue to permit the

other to "reform him" once his goal is reached. There is an endless multitude of unhappy unions all of which were begun in this well-meant but unwise manner. If this were not the sad truth there would be no need of dwelling upon the matter with so many words.

But the very fact that confessing Christians can associate so easily and so intimately with non-believers raises the suspicion whether their confession has been true. For if Christ is indeed first in our hearts, how can we become so intimate with those who are lukewarm toward Him? And again, remember that you are not wiser than Solomon, for whom, though he was the wisest of all men, heathen wives became a snare beyond the power of his resistance. And *Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers: for what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? But seek ye first his kingdom and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you* (2 Cor. 6:14; Matt. 6:33).

Coming back to the social life of your congregation in the narrower sense of

the word I would add, Attend only those meetings where you can either bring something or receive something worth while. Never look upon anything connected with the church as a mere source of fun. In doing so you would degrade the church and waste your time besides. And time, although many are sadly prodigal with it, is man's most valuable asset, the greatest talent given to all and each in an equal measure. The Christian is reminded to *walk in wisdom . . . . redeeming the time* (Col. 4:5, see also Eph. 5:15, 16). For of this talent he shall have to render a solemn account in the day of judgment.

Yet, time is not the only talent God has given man. *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above* (Jas. 1:17), and is a talent to be used in the Master's service. Now the word "talent" originally meant a sum of money. Hence, in speaking of talents let us consider the matter of

Tithing

that is, of laying aside one-tenth of our income for the Lord's cause. Undoubt-

edly that is the Scriptural way of contributing to the many interests of the Kingdom, to missions, schools, benevolence and church. Stingy folk often remark when tithing is suggested to them, "That's in the Old Testament." In fact, that is their main argument to get away from this obligation. A more superficial reasoning, however, could not well be conceived of. Is the Old Testament abrogated? Surely no Christian would hold that view. What has been done away with is only that part of the Mosaic law which is known as the ceremonial law, of which tithing is in no wise a part. Imagine a man saying, *Thou shalt not commit murder* is in the Old Testament; therefore I am free from keeping that commandment! Or, think of some one refusing to be comforted by the words, *Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me,* because "That's in the Old Testament!" Such nonsense is only applied where it may serve easily to get rid of unwelcome duties.

Tithing was not part of the ceremonial law. Nor was it a special command given to Israel. Even if, however, the latter had been the case, that would not free us from the same obligations. For such a separate precept undoubtedly would have been given to the Israelites since they enjoyed so much greater privileges than their forefathers in the ages of slavery that they, too, should show greater gratitude for deliverance out of the house of bondage. But it cannot be denied that we of this dispensation enjoy far richer and fuller blessings than did Israel in the wilderness or even in Canaan. According, then, to the "It's in the Old Testament" reasoning, we really would have to give evidence of considerably more gratitude and give more than a tenth of our income. And this has indeed been and is today the opinion of excellent Christians. Thus Dr. Erdman of Princeton writes, "One may begin with a tenth, but should increase the proportion whenever possible."

Tithing was practiced by Abraham (Hebrews 7), from whom the custom

descended to his grandson. This Jacob, therefore, when he left his father's house a lonely fugitive, voluntarily promised, *Of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee* (Gen. 28:20). This, be it borne in mind, occurred before he had anything which he could call his own. At that crucial point in his life Jacob solemnly *vowed a vow* that he would tithe no matter how much or how little God would grant him of earthly possessions. And this he did some three hundred years before the Lord God reminded his descendants through Moses, that the custom was obligatory for them too.

Thus we meet with the custom of tithing upon the first pages of the Bible. Its origin is nowhere stated, nor its abolishment. Hence we may safely conclude that it was practiced as long as God had a separate people on earth, and that Abel's bringing *of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof* was a tithing of that flock. For it is exactly the idea of tithing that one should not wait to see how much of his income will be left after

all necessaries and luxuries have been paid for, but that one should first lay aside a definite portion for the Lord. Which portion, because it has to be given as a "firstling", not as a "lastling", cannot be measured after future, as yet unknown, needs of the family. It must, therefore, be set apart according to a definite rule, that of separating one-tenth, and thus truly *seek ye first his kingdom* (Matt. 6:33). Of Cain, to the contrary, it is not stated that he brought *of the firstfruit,* but simply that he brought of the *fruit of the ground an offering unto Jehovah* (Gen. 4). And his offer, brought in a haphazard way, was rejected while Abel's was accepted.

If I urge you to start the habit of laying aside one-tenth of your income for the Lord's cause from the very beginning, I do it for the following reasons. First of all, because there is no better way of *confessing Jesus as Lord.* Words are cheap unless they are backed by deeds. To give at random whenever you have a dime left you do not just need, requires no sacrifice. But tithing at first is a sacri-

fice. By practicing it you show that the Jesus you confessed with your mouth is in very deed your Lord, lord also of your pocketbook.

Secondly, because it will prove an immense blessing to yourself. And that foremost a spiritual blessing. We are related to the material world because our bodies are taken from the dust of the earth. *We are also his* (*God's*) *offspring* (Acts 17: 28), because God breathed man's spirit into his nostrils (Gen. 2: 7). If sin had not entered, this latter tie, the spiritual, binding man to his Creator, would have drawn more closely than the tie of the body connecting man with the world of matter. But now sin did come in, and it upset all relations. Ever since man desired the product of the material world (the forbidden fruit) more than he did the undisturbed favor of his God, the strings that tie us to this world of matter pull more strongly than do the spiritual ties which connect us with God and the unseen world above. That is why *the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil* (1 Tim. 6: 10). That is why

by nature we are, all of us, covetous. And that is why an early formed habit of tithing will prove one of the mightiest aids to overcome this unbalanced relation between the physical in us and the spiritual, and a great help for the soul to find its true balance in God.

Parents, therefore, should not only practice tithing for themselves. They should also teach their little ones to remember the cause of the Kingdom as soon as the youngsters begin to receive money: *Train up a child in the way he should go, and even when he is old, he will not depart from it* (Prov. 22: 6).

But not only will this custom prove a source of spiritual good: material blessings will also accrue to him who tithes from the right principle. The true proportion between our love of God and our desire for things temporal once reestablished God can *also . . . freely give us all things* (Rom. 8:32). Hence Presbyterians and Methodists who of late years have conducted a vigorous propaganda in behalf of a return to the custom of tithing have been able to pub-

lish pamphlets full of testimonies of those who stated: Since I began to tithe I have made more money than ever before. This also shows that God does still approve of this old way of contributing to His cause; for in it He fulfills His promise, though "That's in the Old Testament," too. I refer to the promise of Malachi 3: 10. See also Proverbs 3: 9, 10.

And what shall we say of the world of good your money, under God's blessing, will do to the poor, the sick, those now seated in darkness? And what of the eternal reward you will receive yourself when in that Great Day it will appear that your faithful stewardship has brought others into the Kingdom of His Son, the Lord whom you confessed?[1]

[1] Since writing these lines we have been confirmed in our conviction that tithing is a blessed way of giving, and the only scriptural way. Some objections and various questions raised in connection with the topic cannot here be discussed. The entire subject of man's responsibility in money matters, however, is of such importance that we cannot refrain from urging every young Christian to give it most serious and prayerful attention. It would be well if the book, *Money the Acid Test*, by David McConaughy, were read at an early date after the public confession of

You observe that one reason why tithing was recommended to you is that there is a great temptation in money unless we recognize that our money really belongs to Him whose stewards we are. That leads us to a word in reference to

Temptations

in general. You will, perhaps, find that a Christian encounters a great many more temptations than you now expect to meet with. The voice of sin, silenced for the time being by your new joy in your Master's service, will soon ring forth from the impure depths of your sinful heart; the world will again appeal to your senses; the enemy will no more hesitate to assail you than he shrank from attacking the Lord Jesus. While all of God's people have to confess that

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faith. Every phase of the subject is there debated. Why not study it? For many Christians show by the arguments they advance that they have never gone into the subject to any extent. At the same time it is safe to state that deficits would not exist in connection with God's cause among us should all of our church members "*render unto God the things that are God's*" (Matt. 22: 21).

they yield to temptations too often and too easily, we have the sure word of promise that God *will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it* (1 Cor. 10: 13). It would be possible for us to gain more victories and suffer fewer defeats if we would act more according to the warning, *Resist the devil, and he will flee from you* (James 4: 7). But how should we resist the tempter?

During the author's student years the well-known Dr. John R. Mott visited some of the Dutch universities upon one of his trips around the world. The following incident was told the author by a close friend of a student at the famous Leyden University. Of a late evening, after Dr. Mott had spoken to a large audience, urging the students to try for themselves the power unto salvation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, this student appeared at the hotel in which the American resided. He asked that he might by all means be permitted to see the speaker even at this late hour. The request having been granted, the student made the

following appeal: "I have," he stated, "for a long time indulged in a secret sin against the seventh commandment. Realizing the dread result of this sin in a shattered health, and my conscience telling me all the time that I did wrong, I have tried and tried to rid myself of the evil habit; but it has enslaved me so completely that I am about to give up the fight. I am ashamed of myself; I dare not tell others about this thing; but tonight I felt that you certainly would, and perhaps could help me." "What have you done," asked Dr. Mott, in order to free yourself from this slavery?" "I have," was the answer, "tried everything I could think of. I have repeated over and over, while walking the floor in my room, 'I shall not yield, I will not this time.' I have clinched my fist and put my foot down. And finally I give way to sin." "It is small wonder," said the great student leader, "that you have increasingly become the victim of this sin. Sin is something very powerful. It is a very positive force. Now you have endeavored to overcome this positive power with a

negative, 'I will not.' But you cannot conquer a positive force with a negation. You may overcome this evil habit, and you need not despair. But you will need a positive good to fight the positive evil. I would suggest that next time the temptation comes to you, you take your Bible, and you begin simply to read from it. By so doing you will drive out the impure thoughts which have suggested themselves to your mind by good and pure thoughts; and you will find that the good is stronger than the evil. You will continue reading until your mind is calm and clean, after which you will pray to God that He may 'not lead you into temptation but deliver you from the evil one'." That student followed Dr. Mott's advice. Some three years later he met him again. Dr. Mott remembered his case. Few words of explanation were needed: the change in appearance told the story.

I have narrated this true story because I have tried the suggested remedy when tempted to sin myself, and I can assure you with the Leyden student that the advice of Dr. Mott was the best that could

be given. But this is nothing new. Jesus was tempted. And how did He silence the devil? Every time anew *He answered and said, It is written* (Matt. 4). James, too, in the passage just quoted, tells us how we may resist the devil, namely, by drawing nigh to God.

Prayer is the second weapon against temptation. For prayer is our speaking to God. But it may be that our hearts and minds are so full of sin that we cannot for the time being address God in prayer. We can, however, give God an opportunity to speak to us. Against modern unbelief which doubts the divine inspiration of the Bible this suggestion may be acted upon; it will be found one of the strongest experiential proofs of the divine origin of that Book. For the devil is afraid only of the One who is stronger than he, and that is God, Who can slay him with the breath of His mouth.

You will object that we cannot at all times and in all places carry a Bible, or even a New Testament, with us? Very well. Let it be an additional reason why

we should read and study the Book, and make ourselves familiar with such passages as Galatians 5:16-26, Romans 8:12-16 that we may be able to read them from our memories. Along this line lay the serious admonition of the God-fearing poet-preacher Paulus Gerhardt, who in his will requested of his son that should he be tempted to speak angry words, he would recite to himself the Ten Commandments and the Twelve Articles of Faith before speaking. If something like this were done more generally, how many sinful thoughts would be smothered before they could give birth to wicked words and ungodly deeds?

Prayer was mentioned as the second great help toward overcoming temptation. And such it surely is. For does not our God speak to us, *Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me* (Ps. 50:15)? But that is far from being the only advantage of

Prayer

PRAYER is the very heart and soul of the Christian religion. It has been

called the breathing of the Christian life, *the chief part of thankfulness which God requires of us* (Heid. Cat. Ans. 116). We might add that it is the chief means whereby we *confess the Lord Jesus.* For it is only because we have by faith accepted Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior that we can approach God as a Father. You who have confessed this faith in Christ know the awful character of sin. You would not dare draw near so holy a God as is the Maker of heaven and earth, but for the firm belief that He will fulfil the promises of His Son. But you remember His word, *All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive* (Matt. 21: 22). And you recall this other promise, *I chose you .....that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, He may give it you* (John 15: 16). So you pray having boldness through such promises. It follows that whenever you truly pray, you *confess* anew *with your mouth Jesus as Lord* since *in your heart you believe.* This confession may or may not be witnessed by others, as the

case may be: it is made before and heard by God Himself. That is why in answer to your prayer He will surely increase your faith. That is the reason why upon your petition to Him He will give you the needed conviction, courage, and wisdom to confess Him before men in every sphere and walk of life.

This is a subject so vast that we cannot even touch upon its different aspects. Prayer serves so many purposes. For this very reason it is a pity that there is not a good deal more of sincere, heartfelt prayer. It cannot well be doubted that in our busy, hastily lived age less time is taken for concentration, for seeking communion with God, and for meditation than was done in former days. Even our religion has become somewhat one-sidedly a religion of the hand, of doing something for God's Kingdom. Not as if we could do too much for the cause of Christ whom we confess to be our Lord; but it is done somewhat at the expense of developing the inward spiritual life. May the time soon come when with head, heart and hand we shall serve our King

perfectly. Let there be much prayer by those who confess Jesus, *"Come, Lord Jesus; Yea, do come quickly."*

To pray aright is a divine art. Like every other art, it has to be acquired through much practice. And the first thing to be observed in regard to everything which has to be acquired by practice is regularity. You cannot expect to become a graduate in the school of prayer in a short while. Neither should you look for much progress if you practice the habit of praying at random. There will be times when you do not feel like praying. What will you do then? Will you simply refrain from engaging in that sacred duty? But these are the very times when prayer is needed most. For they are the times when the tide of your spiritual life is low. And nothing but reading of the Scripture and prayer will restore to your soul the joy of salvation, and re-establish the sweet communion with your Savior-God. When there is no other prayer in your heart you can at least ask God for *the Spirit of grace and of supplication* (Zech. 12: 10),

that He may give you a prayerful attitude. You might ask with the disciples, *Lord, teach us to pray* (Luke 11: 1).

So what you need above all things is regularity. Always begin the day with God. Ever close the day with Him. Many people have the custom of bending their knees at night before they lay themselves to sleep. They ask God to forgive them their trespasses of the day. They render thanks for the blessings He bestowed upon them. They beseech Him to take care of their bodies and souls while they are unconscious and totally unable to protect themselves. And they entreat Him that it may please Him to grant them an undisturbed and restoring slumber; and that they may awake to see the light of another day. But they do not kneel down the first thing in the morning to thank their heavenly Father for hearing that prayer. This is a great mistake we have found in the church. We do not say that it cannot be accounted for. In many a family the custom still prevails that at breakfast the family gathers around the family altar where prayer is

offered for all by the father. Although this should be done, that common prayer should not take the place of the personal prayer as soon as we have risen. Once more then: Begin the day with God. Ask Him to help you with your work. Ask Him to keep you from sinning, to keep you out of temptation, to teach you to do His will *as willingly and faithfully as the angels do in heaven* (Heid. Cat. Ans. 124).

These prayers, the one in the morning and the other at night, need not be long. Christ taught us that we do not obtain acceptance with God through the multitude of our words under any circumstances. If only they be long and sincere enough actually to put us into a brief but vital contact with God, they will put a mark upon the following day or night. Thus it is told of the great Reformed theologian Bengel that some one listened at the door of his bedroom in order to find out how beautiful a prayer that man of God would be likely to offer. But the pious divine was tired after a day of strenuous labor; and all he was overheard to say was this, "Lord, between us

all things remain as heretofore." Now who would say that was a poor prayer?

On the other hand there is also truth in the saying of Mr. Sunday when he advises all his "converts" to pray fifteen minutes a day. "The average Christian," he states, "prays about two or three minutes a day." And surely, if that be true, it is a sad sign of the times. For of the last days it is written, *The love of the many shall wax cold* (Matt. 24: 12). If a husband and a wife love each other, would it be conceivable that they should speak together but two or three minutes of the day? But they may be busy, too busy quietly to sit down for long periods at a time. Their conversation, then, will be piece-meal: frequently, whenever an opportunity offers itself, they will, with a few words, discuss what is foremost in their minds. Besides, long discussions will often be unnecessary between souls who understand one another. It is the same with a Christian speaking with his God. This is not said to deny the desirability of having set times for prayer (and thanksgiving, which is only a particular

kind of prayer). But it should be natural to the Christian not to feel alone when he is alone as far as the presence of other human beings goes. What Scripture calls *walking with God* (Gen. 5:22; 6:9) means to have God for a constant companion upon our path. And what should that be but that it comes natural to such men of God to be godly-minded, to speak often to that unseen but ever present Companion, even if it be with few words? This is the ejaculatory prayer which is uttered in short sentences, on the impulse of the moment, when in danger, when feeling needy, when receiving a sudden impression of His goodness and greatness, or in any other circumstances which remind us of our Maker. And this is the kind of prayer which has always been strongly recommended by the best teachers of the church.[1)]

Although alone with God who reads your inmost thoughts, it would be good

[1)] You might profit in this somewhat neglected sphere by the perusal of a small and inexpensive booklet by an old-time mystic, *The Practice of the Presence of God*, by Brother Lawrence; F. H. Revell Co., Publishers.

for you should you pray aloud occasionally. You would thereby overcome that unwarranted dread of hearing your own voice in prayer which so many people foster. And thus it might become a help, a preparation for a task which undoubtedly awaits you in later life. It is the task of leading your family in prayer at the family altar. This is the duty of every father, and of every mother as well in cases where the father through absence from the home, or through sickness, is unable to lead. Or, even if you should never know the blessings of a family life, you will be invited for dinner; and you will be requested to ask a blessing upon the food to be consumed. What a pity, what a shame it would be, should you who are so talkative, perhaps almost eloquent upon many a subject in the presence of man, suddenly have to become awkwardly silent, and have to own that in the presence of God you have nothing to say! What a poor way of confessing with your mouth that would be!

You should start this good habit on the

very day of entering upon family life. Postponing only makes it all the more difficult to begin later. Why should you commence all at once what you never did before? Why today? It would be so strange, so surprising. You will wait another day. That is the way it will go if you do not begin at the start. Should you have done so already, break with the evil custom at once. Tell your wife that you are convinced you did wrong. Look up to God for strength. Remember, what is good enough for God to listen to —the prayer you would send send up silently—is also good enough for your human relatives to hear. Be simple. Be brief. And bear in mind that our God says, *If any of you lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him* (James 1:5). If you are convinced it would be a good thing for you to do, this praying aloud at the family gathering around the table, ask the Lord to help you. He will fulfil His promise. But you must intend to do it. Do not pray for wisdom while not firmly per-

suaded that you are going to try it. For that would be fooling with prayer. And God would not waste His grace upon anyone. *For he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that seek after Him* (Heb. 11:6). Do it, then, looking up to Him with childlike trust and a feeling of dependence. For, should you not lead your family in prayer, whence will your children learn to pray? Or, if husband and wife never hear one another's voice in prayer, how will it be possible for them to grow together, to grow in mutual acquaintance, as well as in the love and grace of the Lord whom they both should *confess with their mouth?*

We will, however, not lay down many rules as to the how and when of prayer. For here above all character and disposition, outward circumstances of life as well as the nature of our work, will have a voice in the matter. While no coercion from outside would do much good, the only one who should force a grown up Christian (him who confessed his Lord) to pray is the Christian him-

self. If it only be remembered that prayer is indeed the pulse of our spiritual life so as to make us practice what we sing:

Take time to be holy,
Speak oft with thy Lord;
Abide in Him always,
And feed on His Word;
Make friends of God's children,
Help those who are weak,
Forgetting in nothing
His blessing to seek.

Take time to be holy,
The world rushes on;
Spend much time in secret
With Jesus alone;
By looking to Jesus
Like Him thou shalt be;
Thy friends in thy conduct
His likeness shall see.

Take time to be holy.
Let Him be thy Guide,
And run not before Him,
Whatever betide.
In joy or in sorrow
Still follow thy Lord,
And, looking to Jesus,
Still trust in His Word.

Take time to be holy,
Be calm in thy soul.
Each thought and each motive
Beneath His control.
Thus led by His spirit
To fountains of love,
Thou soon shalt be fitted
For service above.

Do you not sing:

> O how love I thy law!
> It is my meditation all the day?

And you mean that, do you not? You do not sing it merely because it reads that way in your Psalter? Then take time to be alone with God that He may speak to you, and that you may commune with Him. Said an old church father, *Three things make the Christian: Scripture-reading, meditation, prayer.*

Prayer is also a wonderful aid to keep your soul erect under the burden of

Trials

TRIALS are closely related to temptation, though different in origin and purpose. While temptations are seductions to evil coming from an evil source, by trials we understand afflictive circumstances or conditions sent by God in order to test and increase our strength, faith, and patience. Thus it is said on the one hand, *Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, and He*

Himself tempteth no man: But each man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed (Jas. 1:13, 14). While in reference to trials, their divine fountain is indicated in these words, *Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial among you, which cometh upon you to prove you, as though a strange thing happened unto you: But insomuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, rejoice, that at the revelation of his glory also ye may rejoice with exceeding joy* (1 Peter 4: 12, 13). But trials oftentimes become temptations when the enemy of our souls instigates us to work against the kind Author of our trials and thus to sin against His will. Now if you look at these words of the apostle Peter, you will find there sufficient reason why you should not resist trials. As was the old saying, *The wood of the cross is a tree of life.*

But even if it were not so that *the proof of your faith* is *more precious than gold that perisheth* (1 Peter 1: 7), we would here speak of this subject. For here you have again one of the most ex-

cellent opportunities to *confess Jesus as Lord.* We cannot all of us be preachers or missionaries. We do not have each one of us the same ability to confess Him by speaking of Him to others, but—we can speak by our deeds. This has been understood at all times. Wrote Seneca, a famous Roman who lived at the time of Christ, to a friend, "Come and see; for people believe their eyes rather than their ears; and so it is a long road by precepts, a short and efficacious one by example." And today it is said, "Deeds speak louder than words." This is also Biblical. Peter admonishes Christianized wives of heathen husbands to live as Christians, *that, if any obey not the word, they may without the word be gained by the behavior of their wives* (I Peter 3: 1). Now Christ is your Lord, which means that His will is your law. This is an easy matter when His will runs parallel with yours. But when His will goes against the very grain of your human being, when you are called upon to suffer, then quietly to submit yourself to His doings, and

without murmuring, if you cannot sing at least to hold your peace and wait for His salvation—this is showing beyond a doubt that you not merely call Him Lord, but that you recognize Him as such. For this twofold reason you may expect afflictions. They will teach you submission to His divine will; and your attitude toward them will show your confession to be true. For of Christ, the perfect man, it is written, *Though He was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which He suffered* (Heb. 5:8). How much more will it be necessary for you whose will has received a sinful bent, to be chastened that you may learn obedience? Again, Jesus proved never more conclusively the truth of His word, *My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to accomplish His work* (John 4:34) than in the hour when He was sweating blood because of the agonies of hell. For even in that dreadful hour He prayed over and over again those same words, *Nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt* (Matt. 26:39). How, then, could you confess His Lordship over you

better than by praying, when the billows of anguish go over your suffering soul, *Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth* (Matt. 6: 10)?

It is well for us that we should pray in the days of our prosperity for the submissive, obedient heart which is the essential characteristic of the servant. Then if adversity comes suddenly as it usually does, we shall be prepared to meet the storm as does the tree whose roots are deeply shot into the earth. But if in days of good fortune we accustom ourselves to leading a prayerless life, to forgetting Whom we are to serve, how hard it will be to find the Master when we need the upholding strength of His comforting face!

Young Christians should realize that while sorrows must come to all, the deep waters of suffering shall go over the souls of God's people far more than over the children of this age. Asaph learned this. See Psalm 73. And the wise king said, *My son, despise not the chastening of Jehovah; neither be weary of His reproof: For whom Jehovah loveth He re-*

proveth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth (Prov. 3: 11, 12). And this was stated by an apostle, *It is for chastening that ye endure; God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father chasteneth not? But if ye are without chastening, whereof all have been made partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons* (Heb. 12: 5-11).

On the other hand this matter of the disappointments and pains of life becomes considerably lighter if we look at it from the right angle. That Jesus is your Lord means *that ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold . . . , but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ* (1 Peter 1: 18, 19). And does not His buying you with His blood prove that He loves you? And that His Father Who sacrificed Him, loves you? Is not everything God does to you done for this same reason: that He loves you, hence desires to prepare you for a life in His sinless presence? It is not the vine that receives no care

which will bear fruit, but the one the branches of which are cut and trimmed. So we must realize that *all chastening seemeth for the present to be not joyous but grievous; yet afterward it yieldeth peaceable fruit unto them that have been exercised thereby, even the fruit of righteousness. For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory* (Heb. 12:11; 2 Cor. 4:17). So the glory is not in spite of, but through the suffering.

Gradually we should learn to understand these texts, which have been appreciated by all those who have testified that it was not the joy but the sorrow in life which led them nearest to God. Then we shall also understand how it was possible, yes perfectly correct, that for each one of us, upon the occasion of our public dedication to our Lord, an entire congregation prayed to God, *"We beseech Thee . . . that he may daily follow Him, joyfully bearing His cross"* (*Form for the Administration of Baptism*). Shall we not pray, then, for a heart that is

willing and strong to suffer for the Lord, to endure trials with the Master?

O Joy that seeketh me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to Thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain,
And feel the promise is not vain
That morn shall tearless be.

If the author of that hymn had not gone through the valley of tears himself, he would not have known how to comfort others. But when, blindness stealing upon his mortal eyes, his earthly love forsook him, he learned to sing,

O Love that wilt *not* let me go,
I rest my weary soul in Thee.

O Light that followest all my way,
I yield my flickering torch to Thee.

O Cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from Thee.

And thus George Matheson, like the little bird whose eyes are taken out that he may seek for a comforting pastime, sang his great hymn which has comforted countless multitudes.

Or, let me mention but one more in proof of the infallible rule laid down by

the Savior, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit* (John 12: 24). If Paulus Gerhardt had not suffered from persecution because of his religious conviction, as well as from terrible losses in his family, how would the world have had that immortal hymn,

Commit thou all thy griefs
And ways into His hands,
To His sure truth and tender care,
Who earth and heaven commands.

Who points the clouds their course,
Whom winds and seas obey,
He shall direct thy wandering feet,
He shall prepare thy way.

Give to the winds thy fears;
Hope, and be undismayed;
God hears thy sighs, and counts thy tears,
God shall uplift thy head.

What though thou rulest not?
Yet heaven and earth and hell
Proclaim, God sitteth on the throne,
And ruleth all things well.

Leave to His sovereign sway
To choose and to command;
So shalt thou wondering own, His way
How wise, how strong His hand!

Thou seest our weakness, Lord;
Our hearts are known to Thee:
O lift Thou up the sinking hand,
Confirm the feeble knee.

Let us, in life, in death,
Thy steadfast truth declare,
And publish, with our latest breath,
Thy love and guardian care.

If you will do all these things, practicing what we have recommended in the beginning in reference to Scripture-reading and Scripture-study, and the social life of your church, as well as what was added as to seeking pleasure in exercising fellowship with your Lord, you will naturally be less in need of "amusements" than are the worldly minded. And part of your diversion you will find in the meetings you will attend. Still you are entitled to some other

Recreation

YOU cannot, you need not be serious-minded all the time. I trust it will be superfluous to remind you that card-playing and dancing are not the proper amusements for a Christian to indulge in. Card-playing has been condemned

by all sorts of leaders of the youth because of its tendency to gambling. While the logical result of dancing is that impure thoughts and lusts are awakened in the head and heart of the young lad first, and often of the maiden, too.

But I had in mind something else against which I wanted to warn you: Make it your practice to stay away from the moving picture shows. Of course, the invention of the cinematograph was a wonderful invention. When used in order to acquaint us with conditions in foreign lands, the beauty of valleys and mountains, the social conditions of the needy, or to portray a scene from history, there can be little against that. Although even from a psychological viewpoint some protests are being voiced against the swift moving reels. It is claimed by some authorities that the effects of seeing moving pictures are too superficial, that the vague impressions are formed too easily and often succeed each other too rapidly to attribute as great a pedagogical value to the moving film as some would have us do.

But be that as it may. We are not speaking of moving pictures in the abstract. We are facing a thoroughly corrupt industry. You need do no more than glance at the billboards outside and you will realize that by far the majority of the "movies" are either silly or immoral. And does not all that fall under Paul's condemnation, *But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as becometh saints; nor filthiness, nor foolish talking, or jesting, which are not befitting; but rather giving of thanks* (Eph. 5:3)?

People will excuse themselves by stating that they go only to "good movies". There are, however, a number of objections to that assertion. In the first place, although I do not deny the possibility that there may be a few stray "good movies" existing today, surely they must be as a needle in a hay stack. How to find the needle? By first examining all the hay? In other words, how will you decide that the movie you are going to see is good, before you have seen it?

Will the advertisement of the manager be the criterion? That would be a poor measure indeed.

Secondly, while the great majority of the movies are positively immoral, and consequently dangerous, what is the moral of your so-called "good movies"? Are not these the ones which mock the influence of the church and the church's religion, holding high the example of the moral man, the Pharisee, as distinct from the church member? And is not the way in which they evoke continually changing emotions unhealthful for the development of a sound mental appetite, spoiling the devotees of the movie for the enjoyment of wholesome literature?

Thirdly, there is the same argument against the alleged "good movie" which has always proved an unsurmountable obstacle in the way of starting a good theater. In your good plays are the bad characters which have to bring out the value of virtue by way of contrast. Some one has to take the roll of that bad character. Has to think himself into that character. Has to learn to like it in order

to play it well. And besides your "good movies" often have their half nude chorus girls in order to escape from being "too dull".

As to theaters, vaudevilles and the like, do not visit them at all. If you should not refrain from doing so for your own soul's sake, do it because of the poor actresses and actors who are almost sure to be tempted to leading loose lives on account of the work that is theirs in order to amuse the public. And as to movies and all other questionable amusements, let me give you a sound rule. Here it is: *Never go to any place where you would not want to take your Savior.* Remember, you confessed Him to be your Lord. That means that you should not send Him away at times, or request Him to leave you alone for a while. Now if that rule be followed religiously, if you will make it a point that you shall never indulge in any form of pleasure your Master would disapprove of, and that in the light of the words of His apostle quoted above, do you think you

will be very much tempted to frequent the movies? Surely you would never enter because of anything suggesting something base, would you? In fact, you would not think of going unless you had at least a reasonable amount of certainty or well-founded expectation that you were going to see something uplifting, something which would not make it harder for you to live an all-round Christian life? And viewing the movies as they exist today in that light, in the presence of the all-seeing eye of your Lord, what will be your inevitable verdict concerning them?[1)]

Besides all this, however, it should be emphasized that not all recreation should be in the form of seeking "amusement". If our hours of leisure are spent with an

[1)] Before loosely condemning the above opinion on the so-called "questionable amusements", which is the result of much thought upon the matter, you should at least give this important subject serious attention. I would earnestly recommend your reading the following: *The Christian and Amusements*, by W. E. Biederwolf; *As to Being Worldly*, by E. J. Tuuk; *The Menace of the Movies*, by Fred Eastman. These may be ordered from the publishers of this booklet.

eye toward improving our physique and our minds, there are so many good and pleasant things to do that I fail to see how one can feel tempted to indulge in "amusements" of the questionable type. There are rowing, fishing, hiking and skating; there is baseball, croquet and golf for out of doors. We have basketball, volley ball and swimming as indoor sports. Many a growing lad would indeed do well to spend some of the money that now goes up in "smokes" for a membership in the Y. M. C. A. Then a number of games may be purchased at small cost, all of which stimulate the mind while affording a pleasant hour at the same time. Foremost among these ranks the noble game of *Chess* that has captivated the mind of man since times immemorial. But also the more humble ones are stimulating and refreshing, such as *Caroms, Halma, Camelot,* and even *Checkers.* So-called *parlor games* may afford a group of young people any amount of fun; and it is little short of marvelous how much can be accom-

plished in this field with a few ordinary household articles.[1)]

So much for "fun". But should not at least one evening a week be devoted to the reading of good literature? There are numerous good books which you will never read unless you peruse them in the years of your adolescence. One or two evenings should be spent in your church, where you will attend the adult Catechism Class and the Young Men's or Young Women's Society. And now I have not spoken of *music* yet, and what visions does not the mere word conjure before your mind? It is true that not everybody is equally musically gifted. It is fully as true, however, that more talent remains dormant in the human family than goes to waste. It was not altogether a joke when the man, upon being asked if he could play the violin, replied, "I do not know, I have not tried it". The ability to sing, or to play a musical instrument, needs cultivation as well as does the faculty for reading. But

1) Every church library should contain some such volume as *Phunology,* by E. O. Harbin.

how the end rewards the pains! It is by far easier to tune in on the radio than to practice the piano. But he who has mastered a song, or a Sonata, will have improved himself, will enjoy putting his own soul into what has become his own music, and he has all along raised himself to a height where he can understand and appreciate music rendered by others. Even in case your circumstances might prevent you from taking up the study of music for yourself, it will be well for you to develop the taste for good music by attending occasionally a good concert, whether instrumental or vocal. There is a wonderfully refining and soothing quality about good music. There was a profound thought in the legend of the ancient Greeks, who told in their mythology of Orpheus. When Orpheus added to the strains of his lyre the notes of his voice, so the legend has it, the wild beasts were tamed, the rocks moved, the trees bent down their branches, and the gods granted his most exorbitant wish. Saul was quieted by David's harp; Elisha was inspired upon the hear-

ing of good music. We are told that all nations have first used their music for religious purposes. And of comparatively late times it was reported that more people were moved by the singing of Mr. Sankey than by the preaching of Mr. Moody. So you might at least join the *Choral Society* in your church. For it is the beauty of concerted singing that the imperfection of the individual voices is to a large extent absorbed in the attainment of the whole.

If now you add to all of this, or to some of it, an evening for quiet and wholesome conversation, that fine art, what becomes of your surplus time that must be spent in theaters and over card games? Remember that not idleness, but a change of occupation often provides the best relaxation for the mind.

In this connection I would remind you that the Sunday is not a day for amusement, although a day of rest from labor. Sunday is

The Lord's Day

and as such it should be spent in His service. If one day out of seven seems

too much for so lofty a purpose something is wrong with our *confessing Christ* as our Master. There would be a discrepancy between word and deed. And since this is the Lord's, our Lord's Day, we shall not keep a large portion of it to ourselves asking Him to be satisfied with a few hours of His own day. You will then go to church, and you will go twice, will you not? And, realizing that going to church is different from going to some social meeting, you will ask a special blessing upon the morning of the Lord's Day? You will pray that your church-going may be more than an empty form. That you may indeed *confess Him* among His saints with your heart as well as with your lips. You will humble yourself before the High and Holy God, confessing your sins, seeking His pardoning grace, beseeching Him that He may be found of you in the services, and that He may speak to you through the words of His servant? Remember also your pastor in your morning prayer, for if you pray that God will use him to instruct and comfort you, he will be able to preach better ser-

mons that day. Nor should you omit to pray for those who will appear with you in God's sanctuary. The result of such a prayer will be a divine blessing to them, for your Father hears your prayer; and to you, inasmuch as you will go to church in a brotherly spirit, prepared to enjoy the communion of the saints.

You know that even the best things can be corrupted, and that deeds seemingly praiseworthy are worse than nothing when done from an utterly false motive. That is why we so strongly emphasize that you should not go to church without first seeking the presence of the Lord. For there is nothing to be compared with prayer when it comes to seeking and obtaining right and holy motives. On the whole our church pews are quite well occupied twice, in some places even three times, on Sundays. In itself that is, of course, a thing to be gratefully recognized. If *belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ* (Rom. 10:17), the Word must be heard first of all.

But do our people always go to church

from the right principle, with a true desire to meet God in His house? Or has church going to a large extent become a social recreation, an entertainment with many, a sort of substitute public amusement? Our people are not used to going to places of public diversion, especially not on the Lord's Day; and so they have to have something to take its place. Is that why they go to church? Judging from the spectacle offered by many of our churches on Sunday nights, one can hardly get away from that impression. Our edifices for worship often resemble places for courtship. Instead of families appearing together before the Lord's face, as is the custom in many an American church, young people huddle together in couples in the back seat. This custom is to be condemned even if it has become quite an ordinary thing among us.

And a good deal worse is what this leads to in many a home. What we mean is not so much the going home together of young boys and girls after services as their sitting up until far into the night

even after older members of the family have retired. This habit cannot be condemned strongly enough. How can one pray the Lord's Prayer, *Our Father .... lead us not into temptation* while doing such things? Even among people who claim no special religious conviction, but who pride themselves on a good training, these things are unheard of. Young men visiting their girl friends, leave at ten o'clock. To stay later than eleven o'clock is considered bad manners. Should we be behind the world in this matter? Should we keep such late hours on Sunday as to cause a "blue Monday"? Is that the rest for which the Lord's Day has been instituted? Was that meant by *Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy* (Ex. 20:8)? In your own circle, in your own private life, will you help to root out that evil habit? You *confess Jesus as Lord:* will you spend the day which is named for Him in His service? Will you live it, with His help, in such a fashion that it prepares you for better work during the following days? And that, in the beautiful phraseology of your

Catechism (Answer 103), *I cease from my evil works, and yield myself to the Lord, to work by His Holy Spirit in me: and thus begin in this life the eternal Sabbath?*

Another point. To *confess Jesus as Lord* in the midst of His church means to request that you may be admitted to *the Lord's Table.* In baptism all God's Covenant blessings were promised and sealed to you personally. God the Father promised you that He would be a forgiving and loving Father, God the Son that He would be a cleansing Savior, God the Spirit that He would be an abiding Sanctifier unto you. In the way of faith all these promises were to be realized by you. Now you have become of age, and you have laid your hand upon these promises, humbly but fervently beseeching God that He may grant you the choice of His blessings. Oh, how splendid it is *to confess Jesus as Lord* as you have done! It means that you openly state, in the presence of God and man, I believe that Thou, O Father, wilt pardon all my iniquities. I believe that Thou,

Christ, Who hast suffered such untold agonies of shame and pains of hell, and hast been held with the bonds of death, hast endured all this for my sake. I believe that as Thou didst rise for me so I did rise with Thee, out of the bondage of sin unto the newness of Thy life, to be lived in me. I believe that Thou art in heaven for me, willing to be my guide, to pray for me, to teach me how to have fellowship with Thee and Thy loving Father. I am persuaded that Thou hast sent the Holy Spirit a substitute to fill Thine empty place in my home and heart while Thou art preparing a place for me in Thy Father's house with its many mansions. I am convinced that this Holy Spirit, kindly guide, will help me and sustain me in all of my feeble efforts to live for Thee. I love Thee, God, my God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, for I have believed and therefore I must speak. I must cry out, confessing to the world, that there is no God like unto Thee, willing to give Thine all for me, glad to lay down Thy precious life for worthless me, ready to dwell within my impure

breast in order to remake it, that my Father might regain a rebellious son, that my Savior might win a human lover, that I might lose a devil, secure a God. All this I believe to be possible because Jesus, my Lord, died for me, paying the penalty of my sins. I shall therefore confess Him to be my Lord by commemorating His death, whenever the Lord's Supper is administered even as He spoke, *This do in remembrance of Me* (Luke 22:19). While an apostle adds that this act of confessing must be repeated *till He come* (1 Cor. 11:26).

But this is not the only reason why your place will not be found empty when the Lord's Table is spread before the congregation. Your faith will not always remain as vigorous as it is now. Be it only because *in many things we all stumble* (James 3:2). So there will be times when the sense of your offenses will be so crushing that you would almost doubt whether you are indeed a child of the Holy One. But again He will renew the promise to you by that *holy visible sign and seal, appointed of God for this end,*

that by the use thereof, He may the more fully declare and seal to us the promise of the gospel, viz., that He grants us freely the remission of sin, and life eternal, for the sake of that one sacrifice of Christ, accomplished on the cross (Heid. Cat. Ans. 66).

For these reasons, then, you will be a faithful attendant at the communion service. And you will realize that this is such a holy act that you are in need of self-examination before you approach His banquet. So you will be present at the preparatory service, and during the preparatory week you will follow the suggestions of the preparatory sermon. Which only goes to show that as the Lord's Day is instituted to prepare for the coming days so the days of labor are partly to be used as a preparation for the Day of the Lord. And thus we understand why our fathers in penning down the above words, added that the right way of spending the Sabbath consists in this *that all the days of my life I cease from my evil works, and yield myself to the Lord,* etc.

Only in this way, if you obey the commandments of your Lord concerning His day, will your faith grow with the years, your joy increase, and the *Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine,* dispel the gloom of every doubt, the shadow of every fear, becoming truly your *foretaste of glory divine.*

There are yet one or two subjects upon which we would briefly touch. The first is that of your

Relation To Others

I ONCE HEARD the following analysis given by an American lady of other than Dutch descent: God has given us two commandments, one that we should love Him, the other that we must love one another. Though He intimated that the former is *the great commandment in the law,* yet He added that *the second is like unto it,* meaning at any rate that it, too, had to be kept. Now the difference between the Dutch people I have met and the other Americans I have come into contact with I believe consists in this.

You Dutch people emphasize the first commandment. We emphasize the second. Both should be equally obeyed. If the first is one-sidedly stressed, we get a dead orthodoxy. And if the second be urged at the expense of the first, we fall into the error of humanism.

I believe that statement is true. I believe also that there is a frank and unbiased criticism here of both the American and the Dutch type of Christianity. The speaker did not say that all Holland Christians are orthodox in their relation to God, in their doctrine, but dead in works. Neither did she state that all American Christians are humanists, meaning that they rely upon their good works rather than upon the sacrifice of Christ unto salvation. But she stated the tendency was there. And I think she had seen well. It is true that human beings find it hard to be entirely well-balanced. It follows that when great emphasis is laid upon our relation to God, when we are taught what to think of God, how to conceive of Him, there is a danger at least that we begin to feel

safe because we are orthodox, and that we forget that besides loving God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, we are also to love our neighbor as ourselves (See Matt. 22:35). It is also true that when in other American circles great emphasis is laid upon loving our fellow men, providing for their spiritual and physical needs by missions and social welfare activities, there is at least a danger of forgetting that after all the love of our whole heart and soul has to leap forth toward the Lord our God. There are churches that send missionaries to preach to foreign nations while their own members are being starved, not understanding the contents of the Gospel.

We should, of course, avoid both extremes. It is possible, by the enlightening influence of the Holy Spirit, to keep both God's commandments without stressing the one at the expense of the other. But what is often the case? That it is nicer to have an American neighbor than to have a Dutch neighbor. While the former will be kind, going about

minding his own business, the latter is often inclined to watch for an opportunity to find fault and to drag some one's name through the mud. I for one have found more gossiping among Dutch people than among American people. Not among all Dutch people I have met. Be it said to the honor of the Dutch. But among some Netherland Dutch, and with many American Dutch that evil is quite popular. People who go to church and worship together, who partake of the same broken bread and drink of the same poured out wine, will, upon coming home, criticize each other's hats or coats. And, worse than that, they may often be heard telling scandals about their fellow Christians, or eagerly listening to slander, hungrily swallowing it with a, "I believe it; it's just like him."

But the Savior has laid down this golden rule, *All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, so do ye even unto them, for this is the law and the prophets* (Matt. 7:12). This is the law. In other words, if our actions toward our fellow men are not

prompted by love, our orthodoxy will not avail us, for it is at best a matter of the head, but not of the heart. As St. John said, *If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen.* (I John 4:20.)

Will you make that a point of special effort and continual prayer that you may abstain from gossiping, from slander and even from malicious thoughts regarding your brothers and sisters? Will you not do so because it is a commandment of Him whom you have confessed to be your Master? Will you not pray that you may learn to love unlovely man as well as Him who is *altogether lovely* (Song of Solomon, 5:16), because God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son for such as these, and hence wants you to love them also? *I therefore . . . . . beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called . . . . . with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love* (Eph. 4:1, 2). *Put on, therefore, as God's elect, holy and be-*

loved, a heart of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, longsuffering; forebearing one another, and forgiving each other, if any man have a complaint against any (not: go and tell everybody about it, picturing it as dark as you see fit); *even as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye; and above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness* (Col. 3:12-14).

Than which, if you should do the opposite, nothing would be more detrimental to your spiritual life, nothing could possibly gnaw more at the peace of your soul. For how could you worship God *in spirit and truth* (John 4:24) if your attitude toward those with whom you were worshipping were after the flesh and false? Let me advise you to read often I Corinthians 13.

And remember that loving one's neighbor implies strict honesty in business and uprightness in all our dealings. Which latter truth leads me to the last thought I would impress upon your mind. It is, namely, not sufficient to be honest and upright; we are

Saved To Serve

WE are to serve our fellow men, no doubt; but we are to serve God by serving them. The great Reformer John Calvin has taught us that "there is a good reason why we should direct our lives to His glory since He is the beginning thereof." Or, to quote a far greater and final authority, the Lord Jesus said, *Let your light shine before men: that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven* (Matthew 5:16). It was because Calvin (as we believe) understood perhaps more fully than any one else in his day the full import of these words, that Calvinism has always had a tendency to send its sons into political life. Think of Calvin's own model republic in Geneva; think of William the Silent, and later Groen Van Prinsterer, and Abraham Kuyper in the Netherlands; of Woodrow Wilson, the son of a Southern Presbyterian minister, and William Jennings Bryan, a ruling Presbyterian elder, in our own day and land. Our people on the whole have been somewhat backward

in serving their country in government and legislative positions. When one of our own Christian men is running for office, they do not even come out to a man to elect him. It is, however, our duty to produce men like Daniel whose knowledge, wisdom and discretion in high positions of state was recognized by the "king of kings" (Daniel 2:37), and who was a credit to the God Whom he served openly and fearlessly in the face of fiery opposition. Nor is this all. If Timothy Richard, the missionary, became such a power for leavening the Chinese life with wholesome principles as to be highly honored by the Emperor of China; if the influence of Toyiohiko Kagawa, who studied at Princeton Theological Seminary, is felt today throughout all the life of Japan, should not our people with their glorious inheritance become more and more a salting salt through all the life of America? Matrons, teachers, nurses and doctors are needed in our Indian Government service. Excellent work may be done in our city clinics. Why should we miss our calling, and be satisfied only to receive rather

than also to impart in our glorious country? Besides doing work of a directly religious nature, such as helping in the activities of City Missions, therefore, there is a large field that lies open for ambitious young Christians. And what opportunities to teach in our Universities await our men and women who are sometimes referred to by educated Americans as "all born philosophers." Dr. A. C. Van Raalte laid the foundation of Hope College when the immigrants in Michigan were still far from wealthy; he called it "my anchor of hope," and spoke the winged phrase, "Lest our people become the tail in this land." Surely, we, the descendants of that godly stock that crossed the ocean for the sake of religious liberty above all, we do not want to become the head in a commercial sense, and the tail in a religious and ethical sense? Compare here Deuteronomy 28:13.[1]

[1] Every church library should own a copy, and every young boy and girl of Dutch descent should find pleasure in the reading of *A Dutch Settlement in Michigan*, by Aleida J. Pieters, Dean of Milwaukee-Downer College. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich.

If now I look over the pages on which I have spoken to you, trying sincerely to impart some wise counsel such as needed by young pilgrims who are to be beset by temptations until they shall have reached yonder golden shore, it seems as if I have asked some difficult matters of you. It reads as if I want you to be a good deal better than I am myself, or than anybody else is whom I know. Nevertheless, have I laid down too many rules? Did I require more than the Scriptures, our infallible rule of life, demand? Or did I only touch upon a few things, and could I not extract a great many more warnings and lessons from the words of our Lord? Let us not take man for our ideal. Young Christians are often inclined to do that. But every time they are disappointed. For men, even Christians, are disappointing. Let us neither faint nor weary because of what man does or does not do. Let us take the Master for our ideal and for our source of strength: and doing this let each for himself *desire earnestly the*

greater gifts (1 Cor. 12:31). For Christ will never fail us.

Still, what I have laid before you remains difficult to live up to. I admit that. Let me therefore speak a few parting words before I send you upon your way with a Godspeed! And let these last words be an encouragement caught from the Master's lips. Consider what He Himself has spoken concerning

The Reward of Confessing Jesus as Lord

SURELY He, knowing our frame, remembering that we are dust (Ps. 103:14); He who *was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin* (Heb. 4:15); surely He realized how difficult it would be for us always to *confess Him* with word and deed, to obey His commandments fearlessly among a generation which ridicules His claims. For this reason He has not only given us His Spirit who *also helpeth our infirmity* (Rom. 8:26), but He has promised us the greatest of rewards. *Everyone therefore*

who shall confess Me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven. And I say unto you, every one who shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God (Matt. 10:32, Luke 12:8). On the other hand, *But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven. But he that denieth me in the presence of men shall be denied in the presence of the angels of God* (Vs. 33, Vs. 9). What a stimulus to continue *believing with the heart and confessing with the mouth,* and to *try your own selves, whether ye are in the faith* (that is, whether your faith is the true faith, 2 Cor. 13:5). For there will be found in the day of judgment such as have confessed, Lord, Lord, doing even miracles in His name and yet who did not do so from the right motive. *And then will I profess unto them* (i. e. openly, publicly will I confess, in holy mockery of their alleged confession), *I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity* (Matt. 7:23).

What a danger that you should begin with the Spirit, and end with the flesh! But on the other hand, how simple the whole matter becomes if only you will continue praying for the aid of that infirmity-bearing Spirit of His! And, doing that, what a future will be yours! Oh, can you imagine the difference, I do not say now between the final condition of the true confessors and the hypocrites, for I am constrained to believe that your confession has been sincere, and hence that the Lord will keep you inviolate. But can you realize something of the vast difference between your present condition and your bliss untold in that greatest of days? Now you are despised by many because you believe in Him. Now you are hated because you confess Him as your Lord. Even if you are not persecuted as your fellow Christians of this "enlightened" age are in Russia and in Armenia—and well you may thank God that you suffer so little for your confession—yet you are held in contempt. *Not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble* (1 Cor. 1:26),

and for this reason counted as the scum of the nation by the rulers of this world, it holds of this age as well as of any other generation. But a day is coming which will leave all earthly splendor and grandeur far behind it. A King is to be revealed in majesty unknown, in power inconceivable, surrounded by countless hosts, not of dressed-up mortals, but of angels bright and terrible to look upon, serving Him at His beckoning, glorying in the greatness of His crowning day.

And then, O then, you and I, if we may be found to be good and faithful servants, I believe we shall weep for sheer rapture. For then it will appear that we who were once despised are *the people*. And while all earthly splendor shall vanish and decay, nothing remaining but the all-surpassing majesty of the KING OF KINGS and the unthought of power of the LORD OF LORDS, you will also become majestic and endowed with power. For you will be *like Him* (1 John 3:2); and that for no other reason than this one that after He had laid down his life

for you *you did confess Him before men as your Lord.*

And that will not be the end of things, but the beginning, all other things having been only the introduction to life, the overture to the greatest symphony of heaven. *Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world* (Matt. 25:34). *His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord* (Vs. 21). In that day your Lord will make you sharer in His own joy.

Surely, by looking forward to that day you should take heart. You will not lose courage; but will continue to *confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord.* And that you may be enabled to do so worthily, well might you commit to memory these words that you may often pray them,

Take my life, and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my hands, and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love.
Take my feet, and let them be
Swift and beautiful for Thee.

Take my voice, and let me sing
Always, only for my King.
Take my lips, and let them be
Filled with messages from Thee.

Take my silver and my gold,
Not a mite would I withhold.
Take my intellect, and use
Every power as Thou shalt choose.

Take my will and make it Thine,
It shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart, it is Thine own;
It shall be Thy royal throne.

Take my love; my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure-store.
Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, all for Thee.

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